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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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SUBJECT: "VITAMINS FROM FARM TO YOU." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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What I have to say today concerns those tiny little giants of food--the vitamins. I call them tiny giants because such small amounts of them handle such big jobs.

I've just been leafing through a brand new folder from the U. S. Department of Agriculture called "Vitamins From Farm to You." This folder explains the how--the why--the what--and where of the vitamins in simple everyday language. I believe you'll be interested in some of the information in this little folder--so I'm going to pass on to you, right here and now, some of the facts from it.

First of all--the leaflet points out that the farm is the greatest vitamin factory on earth. The farm's vitamin assembly line runs from the ground up. Seeds are rich in certain vitamins. Green growing plants produce and hold vitamins--or vitamin materials. Fruits, grains, and vegetables bring vitamins to you. Animals on the farm get vitamins from feed and sunshine. And animal products, such as eggs, meat, and milk all are a part of the vitamin supply line that ends at your dining table.

In other words, when you eat a variety of good food grown on America's farms and in Victory gardens--you get vitamins in their natural form.

And now--to get down to cases--here are some of the plain facts it pays to know about vitamins A, B, C, and D.

Vitamin A could be called by a war nickname--the "blackout vitamin." For it helps the eyes. It is needed for normal eyesight in dim light. If you get too little vitamin A you may have what is known as night-blindness. That is, you won't be able to adjust your eyes quickly from bright light to darkness. If you have serious night-blindness you cannot see well toward the right or the left even in daylight.

Furthermore, vitamin A is one of the vitamins needed for growth--and for healthy bones, nerves, and teeth. Also, like other vitamins, it helps protect you against infections. And it is important for good skin and good linings to nose, mouth, and other body organs.

Human beings, as well as cows, chickens, and fish, can manufacture vitamin A in their bodies--if they get the right vitamin A materials in food. And human beings can also store vitamin A. However, it's best to get a good supply of this vitamin every day--then you'll have a reserve you can draw on if you ever get less than you need in your daily food.

You can get vitamin A by eating ripe yellow and green vegetables and some red-colored ones, such as tomatoes. Liver, butter, and eggs are also good sources of vitamin A.

Going on down the alphabet, B stands for several vitamins.

The folder points out that the vitamin B group is quite a large family. First there's Vitamin B1 known also as thiamine. This has been nicknamed the "morale vitamin" because it makes for steady nerves...and helps to keep you cheerful. Those who don't get enough thiamine in their food often have poor appetites, slow heart rate, constipation, and a tired feeling.

Another of the vitamin B family is niacin--or nicotinic acid. This vitamin helps nerves and digestion, and helps make your skin healthy. In addition, it is probably the health watchman that does most to ward off the dread disease pellagra.

Still another vitamin of the B family is riboflavin, which is needed for health and normal growth. If a person gets too little of this vitamin, he may get sores around the nose and mouth, his eyes may be over-sensitive to light and become bloodshot.

Almost anyone can improve his health by eating more foods containing the B vitamin. B vitamins come in many foods. Some foods contain only one or two of the B group--others have more. Among those that have the three I just mentioned--thiamine, niacin, and riboflavin--are these: whole eggs--lean beef and mutton, milk, liver,

cabbage, collards, cowpeas, kale. And you're also getting all three when you eat peanuts, dried or green peas, spinach, soybeans, tomatoes, or turnip greens.

Next in the vitamin alphabet is vitamin C. Or if you want to call it by its scientific name, call it ascorbic acid. Whatever you call it, this vitamin makes for healthier tissues. It is especially necessary for healthy bones, teeth, and gums--and is known as the "scurvy fighter."

You get vitamin C in citrus fruits, a number of other fresh fruits--especially if you eat them raw--tomatoes, kidney, liver, and many vegetables. Canned tomatoes and citrus fruits have about as much vitamin C as fresh--so you can store this vitamin on your pantry shelf, too. However, you cannot store large amounts of vitamin C in your body. That means you need to get this vitamin every day.

Finally, the folder takes up vitamin D--the two-way vitamin they call it. For you can get vitamin D from sunshine as well as from food. This vitamin helps bones and teeth grow strong and straight. That's the reason that children must have a regular supply of it right from the beginning.

You can get this vitamin from butter...cream...whole eggs...egg yolks...whole milk...some fish...and from fish liver oils. Also when sunlight meets the skin directly, vitamin D is formed.

Those are just a few of the facts I found about vitamins in this new folder from the Department of Agriculture. But there is much other information in it that interested me--and which I believe you might find helpful, also. There's a list of the foods you should try to get in the family's meals every day. There's a set of first-aid rules for vitamins in the kitchen--suggestions as to ways you can keep vitamins in food right up to the time you serve it. And best of all-there's an easy to understand vitamin table showing the foods that contain each of the best known vitamins.

You can get a copy of "Vitamins From Farm to You." by writing to the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. Single copies are free.